



THE 'EFFINGER' CLOCK: AN IMPORTANT NEOCLASSICAL MUSICAL ORGAN  
CLOCK WITH CALENDAR

Louis XVI, Neuchâtel, La Chaux-de Fonds. Signed by Pierre Jaquet-Droz (1721-1790).  
The movement dated 1783. Inscribed on enamel plaque: "Optimo suo sculteto F.V.  
Effingero a Wildegg patricio et senatori Reip: Bern: In signum grati animi civitas  
Burensis M.DCC.XXX IV".

Wood, lacquered in "verniss Martin" with dusky pink flowers on a light blue ground.  
Opulent gilt bronze mounts designed as garlands, balustrades, vases, scrolled leaves  
and laurel branch with bow. Tall, architecturally designed case, the top with a tent "à la  
turque", on scrolled feet. Brass frontispiece with white enamel dial "en cuvette", hours in  
Roman numerals and minutes in Arabic numerals, and a ring with the date in Arabic  
numerals. Enamel cartouche

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depicting the castle with the city of Büren an der Aare. The center features St. Catherine, the Church- and City Patron Saint of Büren, on top an inscribed cartouche with a crowned Alliance coat-of-arms "Effinger (von Wildegg) und von Wattenwyl". The whole surrounded by drapes and laurel branches of gilt bronze. Movement with verge escapement, striking the 3/4-hour on bell. Organ with 18 metal pipes and eight melodies on a drum. On a tall grained-wood base, carved with garlands and rosettes, and gilt. The door with monogram: VE. 2 keys.

Clock: 46 x 32 x 89 cm. Base: 57 x 37 x 153 cm.

In excellent restored condition. Provenance: - Donation to Franz Victor Effinger von Wattenwyl, 1784. - By inheritance in the same family estate, Berne. - Auction Stuker, Berne Autumn 2013, Lot No. 1156. - Wehrli Collection, acquired at the above-mentioned auction. The magnificent clock on offer is by one of Switzerland's most renowned clockmakers, Pierre Jaquet-Droz (1721-1790), who made this gem of Swiss clock-making in 1783, probably with the assistance of his son Henri-Louis, on behalf of the town of Büren an der Aare for the popular Mayor Franz Victor Effinger von Wattenwyl (1734-1815). This clock is not only of great historic importance, but also testifies to the imaginative, creative skill of the clock-maker. The pavilion-like upper section designed as a tent is probably an allusion to the Islamic kiosk and illustrates the period's taste for the exotic and oriental. A clock, similar in design and attributed to Droz, with the same theme was sold in 2019 by Koller Auctions (A190, Lot No. 1248). The tent motif is taken to extremes in a similar "Day and Night" clock from ca. 1780, in which the gilt bronze upper section is depicted in full relief as a veritable tent. This table clock is now part of the collection of the Jaquet Droz company. The interest in the Orient and the Far East is also due to the fact that, from the last quarter of the 18th century, Jaquet-Droz was doing business in China, India and Japan. By exporting some 600 automated items, pendulum clocks and musical clocks to China, Droz's company was able to arouse the interest of the Imperial court and to trigger the interest of the Emperor Qianlong himself for the mechanical clocks and automated

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items from Europe. Jaquet-Droz was the first foreign watch brand, the precious timepieces of which were imported into the Forbidden City. Numerous works by Jaquet-Droz are still part of the collection of the Imperial Palace Museum. As the enamel plaque below the dial indicates, the clock was a farewell gift from the city of Büren an der Aare to its Mayor Franz Victor Effinger von Wattenwyl (1734-1815), who was the City Mayor of Büren an der Aare from 1778 to 1784. Franz Victor Effinger (von Wildegg), married to Henriette von Wattenwyl, was a member of the Grand Council of Berne from 1775 onwards. A photograph of the clock on offer shows the object ca. 1900 in the vestibule of the Villa Rosenberg in Berne (Cf. Auction catalog Galerie Stuker, Autumn 2013, p. 125). Due to its beauty and historic relevance in combination with the highest technical skill, our so-called "Effinger" clock can be considered a true gem of museum-like quality. Literature with mentions of the clock on offer: Alfred Chapuis, *Pendules Neuchâtelaises - Documents nouveaux*, Neuchâtel, 1931, pp. 102/103, II. 101; *Ouvrage collectif, La Neuchâtelaise*, Editions Alphil, Neuchâtel, 2017, p. 84; Charles Perregaux et F.-Louis Perrot, *Les Jaquet-Droz et Leschot*, Attinger Frères, Neuchâtel, 1916, pp. 234 to 238; Charlotte König-von Dach, *Eine bernische Campagne. Der Rosenberg*, Berne, 1984.

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